

To: Santa Ynez River Technical Advisory Committee

From: Scott Engblom, TAC Project Biologist, April 8, 1998

Re: Minutes from the March 19, 1998 Joint Meeting of the Technical and Consensus Committee

Department of Fish and Game Representation

Dwayne Maxwell, California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) replaces Paul Forsberg as the Departments representative to the TAC. Ron Remple, head of Environmental Services Division in Sacramento, replaces John Turner as representative to the Consensus committee.

Santa Ynez River Hydrology

Several moderate to large storm events occurred throughout February. The first storm happened during February 2-3, which filled 50,000 acre feet of empty storage, causing Lake Cachuma to spill. In anticipation of continued storm activity throughout the month, the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) began a 'pre-release' of water prior to subsequent storms to minimize the magnitude of the peak runoff downstream of Lake Cachuma. The peak hydrograph for the winter occurred at 4:00 pm on February 23, 1998 when runoff into Cachuma was approximately 50,000 cubic feet/second. The pre-release delayed and decreased the peak hydrograph downstream of Lake Cachuma.

Project Biologist Report

With the absence of the scientific collection permit, field activities have been scaled down to redd surveys only. No redds were identified in January, and conditions were too turbid in February and early March to conduct surveys. Conditions have cleared enough in San Miguelito, Nojoqui, and Hilton Creeks to conduct surveys. While no redds were identified in any of the creeks, spawning behavior was documented in the mid-portion of Hilton Creek. The pair of rainbow trout/steelhead was estimated to be 16-18 inches in length.

Several major channel changes have occurred in both the mainstern and tributaries, particularly Hilton Creek. The confluence of Hilton Creek was extended approximately 400 feet downstream, and now empties into the upper portion of the long pool. The majority of the mainstern thermographs were taken by the storms, while those in the tributaries have been recovered. The tributary thermographs have since been redeployed.

The 1996-97 data analysis report for the Santa Ynez River will be distributed to the Biological Subcommittee for comment in April 1998. The scientific collection permit to study steelhead is expected to be issued sometime within the next few weeks.

Management Alternatives Report

The purpose of the Management Alternatives Report was to determine is there sufficient data to evaluate the various alternatives and to identify which alternatives are the most promising with the current resources. Alternatives that are currently being evaluated include:

- Flow related measures with respect to the Fish Reserve Account (affecting the mainstem and Hilton Creek)
- Habitat enhancement opportunities
- Passage barrier removal
- Transporting fish above and below passage barriers (dams)
- Stock supplementation
- Mortality reduction from anglers and predators

Public meetings to disseminate elements of the management plan will take place prior to any implementation of the management alternatives. Comments on the latest draft of the report are due by the end of April. A draft management plan to be presented to the SWRCB (year 2000) is expect to be completed for final review by November of this year.

Hilton Creek Pump/Siphon

Conceptual plans for the Hilton Creek permanent system have been finalized. Barry Longwell was on site during the first week in March 1998 to sight the course of the pipeline. The current design consists of a twelve inch pipe that bifurcates at three locations: one at the upper BOR property line, one at the previous release site (temporary system), and the last at a location which will refresh the spill basin. The pipeline will deliver a maximum of 10 cubic feet/second of flow into the creek. Projected completion of the project is sometime late September, early October 1998.

Heavy equipment used for the seismic retrofit was stored on the west side of Hilton Creek, near Cachuma Village. The BOR has contacted NMFS for Section 7 consultations to build a ford across the new channel of Hilton Creek and the mainstem Santa Ynez River in order to move the equipment back to the other side.

Future Activities

- Migrant trapping will occur when the collection permit is received. The project should be able catch the tail end of the migration period
- Lagoon sampling is scheduled once the lagoon closes. Section 7 consultations with NMFS for tidewater gobis is required prior to sampling activities
- A fish rescue program to relocate steelhead/rainbow trout from Hilton Creek to the long pool, will be implemented before flow and temperature approach unacceptable levels as determined by NMFS and the Biological Subcommittee

Minutes from the August 12, 1998 Joint Meeting of the Santa Ynez River Technical Advisory/Consensus Committee

Project Biologist Report

Upstream and downstream trapping for migrating steel head/rainbow trout began March 23, 1998 upon receiving a scientific collection permit from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), A combined total of 7 upstream migrants and 18 downstream migrants were captured in Hilton, Salsipuedes, and Nojoqui Creeks.

Redd surveys were conducted opportunistically throughout the mainstem and tributaries on the SYR. Poor visibility conditions resulted in few redds documented. However, several redds were identified in Upper Salsipuedes, San Miguelito, and Hilton Creeks,

Fish rescue operations were conducted in Hilton Creek in late June 1998. Participants in the operation included members of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Bureau of Reclamation Technical Advisory Committee, California Department of Fish and Game, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. A total of 831 young of the year (yoy), and 3 adults were rescued from Hilton Creek. There were 678 yoy and 3 adults relocated in the SYR between the spill basin and long pool, with an additional 153 yoy relocated to San Miguelito Creek.

Habitat typing using CDFG habitat typing criteria was conducted in Hilton, Nojoqui, Salsipuedes, and El Jaro Creeks throughout June 1998. Subsequent snorkel surveys in the tributaries (except Hilton Creek) resulted in no yoy steel head/rainbow trout being observed. Moderate numbers of juvenile and small adults were observed in Salsipuedes and El Jaro Creeks, and one small adult steel head/rainbow trout was observed in Nojoqui Creek. Late storms in addition to highly turbid water conditions probably limited successful recruitment.

Snorkel surveys conducted in the mainstem during mid July from mile 3.4 through mile 10.5 resulted in over 1000 yoy and 67 adult steel head/rainbow trout being observed. The majority of fish were observed in pool habitats. Additionally, very few largemouth bass (60 yoy, 2 adults) were observed throughout the survey area, Currently, surface algae generally covers about 10% of the snorkeled habitat units, with some habitats approaching 25% coverage. Releases from the dam are remaining at 10 cfs through September 21.

The majority of the temperature units in both the mainstem and tributaries were lost due to high flows. Thermographs have since been replaced and are being downloaded on a monthly basis.

A draft version of the 1996-97 Compilation Report was submitted to the Biological Subcommittee for comment and review no May 22, 1998.

Department of Fish and Game Regulations

In late July 1998, the DFG changed the fishing regulations to 'no fishing' in the tributaries and

mainstem downstream of Bradbury Dam, according to Dwayne Maxwell and Maurice Cardenas. The new regulations were passed in order to be consistent with the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) restrictions on 'take'. The ESA prohibits 'take' of endangered species.

Hilton Crook Project Update

Steve Edmondson (BOR) discussed the Hilton Creek project work and the two phases of construction. The first phase is in concert with the spillway modifications, which will be completed around October 1, 1996. The second phase is the actual construction of the pipeline to Hilton Creek, which is scheduled to begin around August .24 and be completed November 26 (approximately 90 days after construction begins).

Section 7 Consultation

Steve Edmondson reported that Reclamation submitted a draft Biological Assessment to NMFS last week for formal consultation regarding Reclamation's operations of the Cachuma Project. When consultation is complete, NMFS will issue a Biological Opinion with conditions and an incidental take permit for project operations. Steve also submitted a final report on the Hilton Creek fish rescue, which went through informal consultation with NMFS prior to implementation in late June.

Bradbury Dam Seismic Update

Barry Longwell (BOR) discussed the three phases of the Seismic work at Bradbury Dam. The first phase is the foundation modification work which is mostly complete. The only remaining activity for completion of this phase is seeding disturbed areas with vegetation this fall. The second phase is the modification of the spillway crest structure and construction of the pipeline to Hilton Creek, which is expected to be completed Fall 1999. The third phase is the terrace filter job located at the abutments of the dam. The work is expected to begin during the spring of 1999 and be completed in the fall of 1999.

Fish Account Releases

The Lake Cachuma spill lasted to late July and was then ramped down to 15 cfs, Jean Baldrige reported that Fish Reserve Account releases were then initiated at a rate of 10 cfs. There were 2600 acre feet of water allocated to the Fish Reserve Account in 1998. Runoff patterns this year allowed the reservoir to be surcharged twice, which contributed additional water to the account. Releases of 10 cfs were expected to continue through mid-September, after which the release will be ramped down to a 5 cfs maintenance release through the end of the year. Some water from the Fish Reserve Account has been reserved to conduct an algae flush this year if needed.

Public Workshop Meetings

An overview of the river studies and potential management alternatives was presented to the public on June 10 and 11, and another on July B. Participants who attended the workshops included private landowners, taxpayers groups, fly fishers, and other environmental groups, cattle ranchers and farmers. The meetings were designed to both provide information to the public, and allow the public to comment on various aspects of the management alternatives. Ramona Swenson reported that positive feedback was received on the Hilton Creek siphon, Fish Reserve Account, extending the lower channel of Hilton Creek, fishing moratorium in the lower river below Bradbury Dam, surcharge of Lake Cachuma, hatchery supplementation using wild steel head strains, conservation easements, riparian enhancements along tributaries, removal of passage barriers. Management alternatives that received negative feedback included: Alternative release points along the mainstem for groundwater recharge using the State Water Pipeline, wild steel head hatchery, and purchase of tributary water rights.

It was suggested that another pubic meeting be held January 1999 once a draft Management Plan is available.

Management Plan Progress Report

Jean Baldrige discussed progress of the Fish management Plan. The goal is to provide a consensus based plan to the State water Resources Control Board for the hearings in the year 2000. The Management Plan will build off the Management Alternatives Report (completed March 1998), which reviewed a wide range of potential actions. The plan will include several groups of actions that will address different regions and issues for fish management. Implementation of the plan will be through an adaptive management strategy to allow flexibility in fine-tuning appropriate solutions. Some actions that will assist restoration and recovery of steel head/rainbow trout (Hilton Creek Supplemental water supply system, fishing moratorium, and conservation easements) are being implemented prior to the hearings. Another draft of the Management Plan will be distributed in November 1998, public meetings will be held in January, and a final plan will be ready in June 1999.

Genetic Analysis

Tissue samples have been collected from migrating steel head/rainbow trout since 1993. The majority of the samples were collected between 1995-1997. Two different genetic markers were examined: 1) mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA)', which looks at long-term trends in a population on an evolutionary scale, and 2) nuclear micro satellites, which can look at shorter-term trends such as gene flow in a population. Jean Baldrige summarized the preliminary results, which indicate that the mtDNA types most common in southern steel head populations (types 5&8) were common in fish from Salsipuedes Creek, while types that are more dominant in northern and hatchery populations (types 1 & 3, but still present in southern populations) were common in Hilton Creek, The mtDNA data showed different genetic substructures between the upper and lower basin. The micro satellite analysis grouped together (1) Hilton Creek, long pool, and Salsipuedes, and (2) Alisal, San Miguelito, and Devil's Creeks (samples

taken upstream of passage barriers). Small sample sizes were a problem for further conclusions.

Alternative Funding Sources

Ramona Swenson discussed alternative funding sources to assist carrying out portions of the Management Plan. Potential sources include local sources (Cachuma Trust and Renewal Funds), the state (Department of Fish and Game's Fish Restoration Grant Program, California Coastal Conservancy for the lagoon), federal programs (e.g. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for wildlife, EPA programs on watershed and wetlands, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service) and private foundations (e.g. Packard Foundation, National Fish and wildlife Foundation, and the Strong Foundation). Gwendolyn Gilbert of the US Department of Agriculture provided further details on two programs under the Natural Resources Conservation Service for conservation on private property: the Environmental Quality Improvement Program for agricultural lands, and the wildlife Habitat Incentive Program for non-agricultural areas.

H:/TACBIO



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION South-Central California Area Office 2666 N. Grove Industrial Drive Suite 106 Fresno, California 93727-1551



IN REPLY REFER TO:

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FEB 22 1999

Santa Ynez River Fisheries Consensus Committee (See Attached List)

CACHUMA O & M BOARD

Subject:

Santa Ynez River Consensus/Technical Advisory Committee Meeting -

Cachuma Project

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Enclosed is an agenda for the February 24, 1999 meeting. The meeting has been scheduled for 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., at the Goleta Sanitary District; the address is listed on the agenda. Also, enclosed are the minutes for the meeting on December 9, 1998.

If you have any questions, please give me a call at (559) 487-5299, or for the hearing impaired (TDD) at (559) 487-5933. Thank you for your cooperation in this effort.

Sincerely,

Sheryl Carter

Contract Repayment Specialist

South-Central California Area Office

Enclosures

AGENDA

Santa Ynez River TAC/Consensus Committee Meeting

Wednesday, February 24, 1999

Location:

Goleta Sanitary District (across from Santa Barbara Airport)

1000 Fowler Road Goleta, CA 93110 (805) 967-4519

Time: 9:30 am. to 12:00 pm.

Proposed Agenda:

- 1. Welcome
- 2. Project Biologist Report
- 3. Discussion of Draft Management Plan
 - Hilton Creek Workgroup
 - Conjunctive Use Workgroup
 - Upper Basin Workgroup
 - Tributaries Workgroup
- 4. Hilton Creek Project Update
- 5. Fish Account Releases
- 6. Other Business
- 7. Next Meeting

To: Ramona Swenson, Entrix Jim Mc NAMARA, BOR

From: Scott Engblom

Re: Minutes from the December 8, 1998 Meeting of the TAC

Project Biologist Report

Water temperatures in the mainstem followed a general seasonal pattern with maximum surface temperatures in summer around 25 C. Temperatures at the bottom of pool habitats were generally 2-3 C cooler than surface temperatures during summer. By mid September, temperatures followed a general cooling trend.

Mainstern dissolved oxygen (DO) measurements noted pre-dawn readings 5.0 mg/L, with the bottom of some pool locations as low as 2.5 mg/L. Feeding steelhead/rainbow trout were observed at the head of pool habitats throughout the morning hours of the summer and fall.

Water temperatures in El Jaro, Lower Salsipuedes and Nojoqui Creeks show a similar pattern compared to mainstem temperatures. Water temperatures in Upper Salsipuedes, San Miguelito, and Hilton Creeks were significantly cooler compared to the mainstem with daily maximums remaining less than 22 C throughout the summer monitoring period.

An additional 24 young-of-the-year steelhead/rainbow trout were removed from drying portions of Hilton Creek during several months following the initial fish rescue. All fish were relocated to the mainstern between the spill basin and long pool.

Mainstem snorkel surveys in early December at the Refugio and Alisal Reaches resulted in the observation of nearly 100 young of the year and 15 juvenile/adults. Several bass and catfish were also observed. No snorkel surveys were conducted in the tributaries due to poor visibility. However, a brief road survey was conducted along portions of Quiota Creek in which approximately 100 young of the year were observed adjacent to the road crossings.

Trapping with fyke nets was conducted within the Santa Ynez Lagoon, and two steelhead/rainbow trout were captured. Several brackish water species were also captured during the three days of trapping. Trapping activities were halted due to some bird mortalities, and seining activities were planned instead.

Fish Management Plan

Jean Baldrige spoke regarding the Fish Management Plan. The working draft of the Management Plan was distributed to the Technical Advisory Committee on November 17, 1998 for comment and review. Technical appendices (Hilton Creek Actions, Action in the Tributaries, Upper Basin Opportunities, Steelhead Genetics) are currently being

worked on by members of the Biological Subcommittee and Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento, and will be included in the next version of the document.

Major elements of the Plan include:

Hilton Creek permanent watering system and channel extension

 Conjunctive use between the Fish Account and WR 89-18 water releases and possible multiple release points along the mainstern

 Tributary passage barriers and habitat conservation easements in the Salsipuedes and El Jaro Creek drainage

Trap and truck operations in the upper basin

Public outreach and education program

Comments on the latest version of the Plan should be received by Jean Baldrige or Ramona Swenson by January 15, 1999. The next draft report will be distributed to the TAC/Consensus Committee sometime in March with public meetings shortly thereafter, and a final plan in June. It was suggested that the public meeting to discuss the Management Plan be coordinated with any public meetings for the CEQA scoping process.

Fish Account Releases

Ramona Swenson spoke regarding Fish Account Releases. Fish account releases were initiated late July 1998 at a rate of 10 cfs. Releases of 10 cfs continued to October 12 when they were ramped down to 7.5 cfs and again ramped down to 5.0 cfs on October 19. There were 2,600-acre feet of water allocated to the fish account in 1998. Flow patterns allowed the Fish Account to be surcharged twice this year. Some water from the Fish Account was reserved to conduct an algae flush this year if is needed. However, it was decided to use the water reserved for the algae flush to continue water releases at 10 cfs through mid-October. The Fish Account will have approximately 68 acre-feet remaining by the years end.

Some issue was raised to the accuracy of the Fish release accounting with the gauges at Bradbury Dam. This issue is currently being looked into by the BOR.

Hilton Creek Project Update

Comments received on the EA for Hilton were incorporated into the document, and the EA was signed on October 21. Construction on the Hilton Creek Pipeline began on November 3, 1998. A hydraulic spill in Hilton Creek of 2 quarts was recorded on November 11, 1998. The site was cleaned up immediately and work was allowed to continue. The stone toe construction was completed on November 19, 1998. A report to NMFS by the BOR regarding the construction activities is due on January 3, 1999. Remaining work on the pipeline and the lower stone toe is a few weeks behind schedule, but is expected to be completed by the end of January 1999.

Status on the Reservoir Surcharge Study

The engineering feasibility of two surcharge levels for use by the Fish Account were evaluated: 1.8-foot (5,400 acre feet) and a 3.0-foot (9,000 acre feet) surcharge to Lake Cachuma using the existing gate construction at Bradbury Dam. The results conclude that with appropriate modifications, the gates are capable of safely handling both surcharge levels. The cost of modifying the gates for the 1.8-foot surcharge is approximately \$28,000 per gate (4 gates) and \$53,000 for the 3.0-foot surcharge. However, this study did not address any potential environmental impacts. The park facilities within Lake Cachuma can successfully handle a 1.8-foot surcharge, however, a 3.0-foot surcharge will inundate several park facilities, including areas in the parks sewage distribution system.

NMFS Consultation Update

The BOR is currently working with NMFS under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act with respect to many of the elements of the Fish Management Plan downstream of the Dam. The Biological Assessment draft should be available to NMFS for review sometime in January. Actions included in the consultation include: Conjunctive use, habitat conservation, tributary passage issues, and the public education program. The consultation will be for long-term basic operations, not just for 1999. Jim Watkins (USFWS) mentioned the need to discuss consultation for listed species other than steelhead with the USFWS for those actions that were not already covered under the Contract Renewal EIR/S.

Grant Proposals

Two proposals were submitted in early November by COMB for CDFG funding of actions in Hilton Creek. One proposal was for \$200,000 for the purchase of a pump. The current watering system relies on a gravity feed system. The pump would increase the amount of time water is available for the Hilton Creek watering system. The other proposal was for \$50,000 to enhance passage past an impediment in the mid-portion of the creek. An additional proposal for funding an approximate 1,500-foot habitat extension to lower Hilton Creek was not submitted at this time due to design concerns by the resource agencies. Additional data will be collected to improve this proposal for the next round of funding. Other funding sources that are being considered include Agricultural Lands Commission and the Packard Foundation to fund conservation easements, and Cal Trans for road-related passage barriers. It was recommended that grant proposals be circulated to the TAC to solicit comments prior to submittal for funding.

Other Business

Maurice Cardenas (CDFG) and Glen Greenwald raised concerns about perceived communication gaps in the TAC. The situation has improved lately, and we agreed to

deal with this at the Bio Subcommittee Plus level. The technical working groups that will focus on key issues for the Management Plan will be an important forum for incorporating technical input.

Kate Rees recommended meeting with Nancy Crawford about her concerns regarding year-round flows in the Santa Ynez River and its impact to her cattle operations, construction activities at the Dam, increased vegetation and other issues.

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